

# DAILY BULLETIN

Published weekdays by the United States Mission to the United Nations in Geneva

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

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## U.S. HOPES TO RAISE U.N. REFORM, HUMAN RIGHTS AT U.N. MEETING

Opening of General Assembly to be preceded by events on literacy, migration

By Stephen Kaufman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration is placing management reform and human rights at the top of its agenda for the upcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly and hopes to gain assurances from the organization as to its use of member resources, as well as direct its attention to critical human rights situations around the world. In a September 12 interview with the Washington File, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristen Silverberg said management reform at the United Nations remains a "key priority," and echoed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's view that reform will be a main factor in the decision of whose candidacy the United States will support for the position of the next U.N. secretary-general. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's five-year term expires December 31.

"The United States spends throughout the U.N. system over \$5 billion a year, which is a significant part of our budget to work on development and humanitarian assistance," Silverberg said. "We want some assurance that that investment is a wise one for the U.S. taxpayer, and that it actually is resulting in some improvements on the ground in developing countries, for people who are suffering from human rights abuses, [and] for people who are at risk of communicable disease."

The next U.N. secretary-general should be someone “who has a commitment and the skills necessary to drive the reform agenda in the future,” Silverberg said.

She said the Bush administration wants to ensure that the U.N. is “holding itself to the highest ethical standards” and is “focused on the oversight of member state resources.” The organization also needs to complete its review of ongoing programs to evaluate their utility and effectiveness.

In 2005, the United States asked Secretary-General Kofi Annan to identify and catalogue all existing programs that the U.N. secretariat has been mandated to implement by the Security Council. “They came up with some 9,000 mandates, many of which date essentially from the founding of the U.N.,” Silverberg said. The General Assembly should look at the performance of those mandates and programs to see “whether they are still serving an important purpose, whether they’re being administered effectively, [and] whether they take the right approach in solving problems.”

The assistant secretary welcomed the establishment of a U.N. ethics office and changes in financial disclosure rules, as well as the strengthening of its oversight office over the past year. However, she said the mandate review process remains “incomplete.”

“It’s still possible for the General Assembly to take positive action on this, but they really need to show some progress in the near future,” she said.

#### NEW HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL A DISAPPOINTMENT THUS FAR

Silverberg also said the United States thinks it is important that the General Assembly and the newly created Human Rights Council pay attention to critical human rights situations in countries such as Burma, North Korea and Cuba, rather than what she described as the council’s “unconstructive focus on Israel.”

“We’ve been pretty disappointed by the performance to date of the new Human Rights Council in Geneva. But there is a real opportunity to work in the General Assembly ... to call attention to some of the key critical human rights crises in the world, and so we’re going to do that at as an important priority in the [General Assembly].” She added that when member states act decisively, “the General Assembly can call attention to human rights issues, and it can be a very powerful message to an oppressive regime to hear that a universal body like the General Assembly has condemned its actions.”

However, the council has “gotten off to a very bad start,” she said, and the United States remains undecided about joining due to disappointment over the council’s “lack of attention to some of the really pressing human rights problems we see in the world.”

Regarding the situation in Burma, Silverberg said the United States formally has requested that the Security Council include the issue on its agenda for the coming month, saying the long-standing human rights problems there now have resulted in regional consequences. Citing a report by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and South African Nobel Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, she said the flow of refugees from Burma is causing instability, drug trafficking, human trafficking and the spread of communicable diseases. “We are going to be discussing this actively in New York during the General Assembly and then we think the council will need to take action later this fall,” she said.

#### LITERACY, MIGRATION EVENTS TO PRECEDE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Silverberg said first lady Laura Bush is hosting a literacy conference in conjunction with the General Assembly to which she has invited other leaders’ spouses, ministers of education and educational experts. The U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which runs many international literacy programs, also will be participating.

Silverberg said the event will highlight U.S. efforts to promote literacy and help encourage other countries on the issue. The promotion of global literacy “underlies a lot of things on our international agenda,” she said, because literate populations are more likely to develop to be economically successful, and literacy is key to developing a thriving democracy.

“[D]emocracy depends on an informed population that can hold its elected officials accountable, and you can’t do that without a population that can read,” she said.

It is also essential to focus on women’s literacy, she added. “There’s no better predictor of a child’s chances of becoming literate than whether his or her mother is literate.”

The United Nations also will hold an event on migration ahead of the General Assembly, and Silverberg said it would be an opportunity to emphasize that the United States continues to strongly support immigration and international visitors.

“There’s a lot of misunderstanding about the U.S. record on visa issues. There’s an impression that the country is hostile to immigrants,” she said. “We really need to get the message out that most Americans continue to strongly support immigration and to want the U.S. to be a place where people visit and where legal immigrants choose to live long term.”

#### REDUCING REGULATORY BARRIERS WILL FACILITATE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE GOALS

The Bush administration continues to “strongly support” the U.N.’s Millennium Development Goals for developing countries, and Silverberg said the goals “have to be met with concerted action.” But she tied the issue to the need for management reform, citing “overlap and duplication” within the U.N. system that reduce its effectiveness. The organization also needs to partner with host developing countries and focus on policy conditions on the ground, she said.

“It’s not sufficient for the international community, for donor countries, to continue to contribute foreign aid without paying attention to whether there’s a policy environment in the country that can help make that foreign aid effective. Namely, are there policies that invite foreign investment, that invite trade? Are there policies that can help encourage the growth of small business?” she asked.

A priority for the United States in the coming General Assembly will be to get U.N. programs to address regulatory barriers that are hindering business creation and development.

“So many businesses in the developing world operate in the informal economy, so they operate outside of the tax system or outside of the credit system or without property registration,” she said. The United Nations needs to “work with countries to create the conditions on the ground that really help small businesses grow and flourish.”

The United Nations is “doing some good work” in the area of development, but she said there is “a lot we can do to make U.N. development programs more effective and better contributors towards reaching the Millennium Development goals.”

#### RICE CAUTIOUS ABOUT IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROPOSAL

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Iran reportedly offers temporary suspension of its nuclear program

By David Shelby  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice remains cautious about a reported proposal from Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities for two months in an effort to return to negotiations with the international community over its nuclear program, but said that if Iran is prepared to suspend its activities, the international community is prepared to engage in discussions.

“I don’t think there is an offer ... at this point,” Rice told reporters en route to Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 11. “And the point is there would have to be a suspension. If there is a suspension, then we can have discussions, but there has to be a suspension. And as far as I know, the Iranians have not yet said that they would suspend prior to negotiations, which is what the issue has been.”

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.N. Security Council repeatedly have called on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities immediately and return to negotiations on its nuclear program.

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, reportedly floated the idea of a temporary suspension to European Union negotiator Javier Solana during September 9-10 meetings in Vienna, Austria. The two are meeting to discuss Iran's response to a package of incentives from China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States designed to persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear program. The package of incentives includes technological and economic assistance in exchange for Iran's cooperation, but promises an escalating set of sanctions if Iran refuses to comply with the central demand that it suspend its nuclear program.

Rice said she had spoken with Solana following his meetings with Larijani but had not heard any concrete Iranian offer on suspension. "[T]he question is: Are they prepared to suspend verifiably so that negotiations can begin? That's the issue," she said. In the absence of an Iranian suspension, Rice said, the U.N. Security Council would move ahead with a series of sanctions "that are commensurate with Iranian behavior."

"The international community can bring a lot of isolation on Iran, both formally and informally, both through the Security Council and through like-minded states taking action even if the Security Council does not," she said. "[T]he time is coming very soon when we're going to have to vote on a Security Council resolution." Rice told reporters at a September 12 press conference in Stellarton, Canada, that the foreign ministers from the six countries that offered Iran the package of incentives would meet in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in the coming days "to examine where we are and how we move forward." She said the five permanent members of the Security Council already have put much work into developing a resolution that would impose sanctions on Iran for its continued defiance but that more work must be done.

"I continue to hope that the Iranians are going to take the opportunity put before them, which is to suspend and to begin negotiations," she said. "It's only in that way that we can explore whether there really is an answer to this problem through negotiation." Iran repeatedly has claimed that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful civil energy purposes, but many in the international community are concerned that Iran is developing technology that easily could be diverted to producing nuclear weapons. The package of incentives offered to Iran includes international assistance in developing a peaceful civil nuclear program free of any proliferation risk.

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#### STATE'S HUGHES CALLS FOR A UNITED WORLD TO CONDEMN TERROR

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USA Today op-ed on the international response to terrorism

The following op-ed by U.S. Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes was originally published in the September 12 edition of USA Today and is in the public domain. There are no republication restrictions.  
(begin byliner)

Where's the Outrage?

By Karen Hughes

Five years after the Sept. 11 attacks, one essential ingredient is still lacking in our international response to terrorism: the concerted moral outrage of everyday citizens of every faith and country.

The names of the people murdered that morning read like a roll call of the world's family: Ahmed, Alonso, Chung, Fazio, Fitzgerald, Goldstein, Gonzalez, Jablonski, Mbaya, McSweeney, Mohammed, Rizzo, Wallendorf and Zukelman.

The victims, citizens of more than 90 countries, included a young Muslim woman, seven months pregnant, on her way to attend a friend's wedding; an Iranian grandmother who had overcome her fear of flying to visit her grandsons in Boston; a German businessman in New York to attend a meeting. His son, 4 at the time, said, "If the terrorists knew how much we love Papa, they wouldn't have flown the plane into the tower."

Unfortunately, the extremists we face don't care.

Since that fateful day, hundreds of others have been torn from their families, murdered as terrorists targeted morning commuters in London, Madrid and India, wedding guests at a hotel in Jordan, children in school in Russia and lining up for candy in Iraq, tourists in Egypt and Bali, Indonesia.

Out of the norm

This is not right, or normal, or acceptable, and a much louder chorus of voices needs to join in condemning it. Terrorism threatens all of us. It targets the very foundations of a free society. Yet where are the mothers organizing against terrorism as American mothers did against drunken driving? Where are the fathers promising to teach their sons to choose to live rather than choose to die? Where are the religious clerics and congregations of all faiths arguing that no just and loving God would call on young men and women to kill themselves and others in the name of religion?

To be fair, many voices, Western and Eastern, Islamic and Christian, have spoken out against the violence. Yet the criticism seems oddly muted. Offensive cartoons sparked massive protests in nations across the Islamic world. The international outcry was immediate when civilians were killed in the recent conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. Yet we have seen no similar mass condemnation of terrorist violence and murder, and no hint of remorse from those engaged in these acts. As I have traveled the world, I have met those who try to justify the violence based on policy differences, long-held grievances or a perceived threat from the West.

Those who speak of a clash of civilizations seem to forget that Islam is part of America, that an estimated six to seven million Muslims live and worship freely in America. America and our international partners went to war to protect Muslims in the Balkans and gave generously to help Muslims rebuild their lives after the tsunami in Indonesia and the earthquake in Pakistan, just as many Muslim-majority countries reached out generously to help Americans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We do this because we believe in the dignity and value of every person. The fifth anniversary of Sept. 11 is both a reminder of the inhumanity of the extremists we are up against and the humanity shared by most citizens of the world. The color of our skin, the language we speak and the way we worship may be different, but much more unites us than divides us.

So why aren't more of us doing more to stop the terror?

First, I believe most of us hope that terrorism is an aberration. Unfortunately, I do not believe it is true. Part of my job is to look at the propaganda being spread on Internet sites and TV sets around the world. It is chilling. Bombings are depicted as acts of glory. Children are being taught the language of hate. Thousands of people have been trained in terror training camps, convinced the only way to defend their faith is to kill all others who have a different point of view. Second, the presence of religion in this debate makes governments and individuals nervous. We are unsure how to engage; we hesitate to offend. Yet all major faiths -- including Christianity, Islam and Judaism -- teach that life is precious. We cannot allow what is essentially a death cult to get away with murder in the name of religion.

History's model

It is in the best interest of all the civilized people that the terror stop. And we have a model. Slavery's path from international norm to pariah began with moral outrage. In 1833, one of every seven adults in Britain signed a petition against slavery. That was twice the number of people eligible to vote at the time and the largest public petitioning of Parliament to that date. The grassroots petition drive was born of the conviction that every person has value -- a conviction that should guide us today.

Our challenge is to launch a new grassroots movement across all faiths and continents, a movement that clearly states that no grievance, no complaint, no matter how legitimate, can ever justify the targeting and killing of innocent civilians. A movement that commits to teach our children that life is precious, diversity should be celebrated, and hope can conquer hate. I have read many stories of lives cut short by acts of terrorism. Almost all the victims' families speak of the joy their

loved ones brought to those around them. They didn't deserve to die. And those who killed them earned only shame, not glory. The least the rest of us can do is say so loudly and in concert. (end byliner)

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## WORLD MIGRATION TRENDS TOP AGENDA OF U.N. MEETING

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Plenary session to focus on maximizing development potential of migration

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.N. General Assembly will hold its first-ever plenary session on the issue of migration September 14-15, with an emphasis on how to maximize the benefits of migration for development.

"The United States promotes safe, legal and humane migration," according to a September 11 fact sheet issued by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration in the countdown to the meeting. "The United States seeks to advance effective migration management policies." The United States is committed to migration policies based on human rights, refugee protection, migration controls, anti-trafficking measures and rapid integration of legal immigrants.

Assistant Secretary of State Ellen Sauerbrey will participate in the meeting and address a plenary session.

The United States has a long tradition of migration. Between 2000 and 2005, some 3.7 million immigrants became citizens and 5.8 million received legal permanent residence status, according to the fact sheet. The contributions and cultural diversity migrants bring with them "have made the United States the country it is today," the document says.

Regional migration dialogues are the most effective way to craft effective human migration policies, in the U.S. view. Regional discussion lends itself to the identification of concrete areas of cooperation and policies that will stress humane, orderly, authorized movements of individuals, according to the fact sheet.

## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

One touchstone for the two-day session will be a report of the U.N. secretary-general issued in May, finding that international migration is a sound means to promote development to achieve "coordinated or concerted improvement of economic conditions in both areas of origin and areas of destination."

Migration is undoubtedly a huge global economic force, with job opportunities serving as a significant reason that people locate to another country, the U.N. report said. In doing so, migrants frequently bolster economies in their native lands, contributing to a global total of \$173 billion in remittances sent home to developing countries in 2005, according to the report. The report also points out how different the experience of migration has become in an era of rapid transportation and mass communications. Migrants of the 21st century are able to maintain much stronger ties to their homelands than in the past, forming a "dynamic human link between cultures, economies and societies," the report said.

A U.N. News Service article predicts that representatives from more than 120 governments will participate in the meeting.

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